

GUIDELINES REGARDING TRACKING ANIMAL USE

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this guideline is to provide researchers and staff with an understanding of how animals should be tracked at Liberty University.

GUIDELINE:

All animals generated or obtained for the purposes of research or teaching must be counted against an approved protocol once weaned, ordered, or caught in the wild. The IACUC and federal agencies have the authority to request and review a protocol's animal tracking records at any time. The IACUC strives to maintain a central list of animal use, placing updates from the PIs into a management spreadsheet.

ORDERING/PURCHASING FROM A COMMERCIAL VENDOR

- All animal orders must be done so via the animal ordering form on the IACUC website. Both the IACUC and the person responsible for ordering animals in your department will be notified of the request.
- Once an order is placed, the number of animals will be deducted from the total number approved on the protocol in the IACUC tracking spreadsheet.

OBTAINING ANIMALS FROM A NON-COMMERCIAL SOURCE

- Contact the IACUC for approval prior to obtaining such animals. Upon IACUC approval, the total number of animals will be deducted from the number on the approved protocol.

TRANSFERRING ANIMALS BETWEEN PROTOCOLS OR FACILITIES

- Generally, the IACUC does not allow multiple uses of animals on more than one IACUC protocol. That said, it may be appropriate in certain cases to transfer an animal for use on a second protocol if it is in compliance with IACUC policies and guidelines. USDA approval is required for USDA-covered animal transfers to use an animal under two projects with different scopes.
- An animal transfer request form should be submitted in such cases.
- When an animal transfer request form is received by the IACUC office, the number of animals to be transferred to the receiving protocol is deducted from the protocol. Animals will have already been counted against the donor protocol at the time of ordering, breeding, import, or transfer.
- Should this process be cancelled for any reason, the animal numbers will not change.

BREEDING ANIMALS

- The PI must have an IACUC approved breeding protocol in place prior to engaging in the breeding of research animals. This protocol must include a description of the breeding methods and an assurance that appropriate documentation and tracking methods are in place for maintaining a colony.
- All rodents must be counted when weaned, unless the animals are being euthanized and utilized for research or teaching activities prior to weaning. Animals that are not the correct genotype/sex/etc. must still be counted against the total number of approved animals on the protocol. Pups that are stillborn do not need to be counted.

- Animals bred but not used for genotyping or experiments must be euthanized prior to weaning or be transferred to another protocol. This should be explicitly stated in any animal use protocol.

ANIMALS USED IN FIELD RESEARCH

- Unless otherwise stated in the approved protocol, animals should be counted at the point of capture whether they are specific to the animal needed for that field assessment or not.
- The PI or designee must keep track of the number of animals used during the field season and should report these numbers on the annual review form. If it is expected that the number approved on the protocol will be surpassed, an amendment must be submitted to the IACUC for approval prior to proceeding.
- Animals captured in the field should not be housed unless specifically approved in the animal use protocol.

TRACKING USDA-COVERED SPECIES

USDA-covered species exclude: fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and rats (*Rattus*) and mice (*Mus*) bred for research. USDA-covered species must be tracked by the highest pain category of procedures conducted on them for research. The annual report to the USDA includes the number of animals used under each pain category and should be reported to the IACUC office prior to December.

- All animals should be tracked for inventory purposes (acquisitions, births, deaths, euthanasia, transfers, sales), but the only animals that are required to be reported on the annual report are those used or held for use in research activities.
- Stillborn animals, unless this is study related, are not reportable to the USDA on the annual report.
- If breeding or manipulation for research purposes of pregnant females or their fetuses or offspring is being done on covered animals, then stillbirths or spontaneous deaths would need to be reported.
- Incidents of USDA-covered species that die in transport are reported immediately to the USDA through the VMO, not on the USDA animal report, so that transportation can be evaluated; these animals would not be counted on the protocol.

MULTIPLE USES OF ANIMALS

- The IACUC must review and approve all procedures including multiple procedures on a single animal.
- Multiple survival surgeries must be scientifically justified and approved by the IACUC before implementation. Animals with previous survival surgery on one protocol cannot be used for survival surgery on a second protocol unless approved by the IACUC. USDA approval is required before USDA-covered animals can be transferred for use on two different projects.
- Animals must be counted once against each protocol in which they are used.
- If a terminal procedure is conducted under one protocol, and tissue is taken for use on another protocol, the animal is only counted against the first protocol.